

Chuck Darnell

From: Nancy Singh <nancy.singh@me.com>
Sent: Saturday, February 1, 2020 5:28 PM
To: Chuck Darnell
Subject: Stafford Development Proposal for Baker Creek North

This message originated outside of the City of McMinnville.

February 1, 2020

City of McMinnville Planning Department
Attn: Charles Darnell
231 NE Fifth Street
McMinnville, Oregon 97128

RE: Stafford Development Proposal for Baker Creek North

REFERRING TO:

Policy 68.00 The City of McMinnville shall encourage a compact form of urban development by **directing residential growth close to the city center and to those areas where urban services are already available** before committing alternative areas to residential use
MMC decision criteria: "The streets are adequate to support the anticipated traffic, and the development will not overload the streets outside the planned area."

McMinnville Municipal code (MMC): "Resulting development will not be inconsistent with the Comprehensive Plan objectives of the area."

Dear Members of the McMinnville City Council,

As relatively new residents of McMinnville, we were hesitant to get too involved in town issues until we had a greater understanding of our new town and the challenges it faces.

We moved here from a larger suburban area outside of Seattle that, over the ten plus years we lived there, had become a rival city to Seattle. We left Bellevue last March for what we hoped and felt assured would be a town that, while providing some nice amenities for its residents, still had the shared values to retain a small town feel, with open spaces, clear skies, and a desire and commitment to honor the land.

We recently attended the local town hall meeting to discuss Stafford's Baker Creek North development. We left with a sinking feeling of deja vu. The Baker Creek Southwest development has quickly sprung up across from our home. We are singularly unimpressed with this development and our concerns that Stafford was planning a similar development just blocks away spurred us to attend the meeting.

Since then we have tried to quickly educate ourselves on the traffic concerns and the resulting plans the town has adopted to address growth. That evening several residents spoke about the inability of Baker Creek Road to handle the increase in traffic that will make the commute to 99 a horrendous inconvenience. We believe it will also lead to dangerous situations for school children, walkers, bikers and the average trip to the grocery or pharmacy. There are a number of cul de sac streets fronting Baker Creek and it is already getting difficult to make a left turn from those. We have personally seen drivers give up and make a turn to go to the round about at Hill to reverse direction towards 99. We have seen near misses too.

Every town struggles with growth. McMinnville is no exception. In the 2010 TSP, the planners outlined the struggles, and the plans that, with anticipation of growth, would safeguard against some of the more egregious traffic scenarios and cookie cutter developments we have all experienced in some of the surrounding towns closer in to Portland and other large suburban towns.

Bedroom communities can and do have explosive growth when situated so close to a large urban city like Portland. However, being a good hour or more away from Portland, we felt we had made a very good choice for our retirement home in McMinnville. Close enough

to be available on the odd occasion, but not so close as to attract run-away, unchecked growth, frustrating traffic, increased crime, homelessness, etc.

Our concerns are the following:

1. There is insufficient ingress and egress to the planned development.
2. There is insufficient parking for residents and retail/commercial tenants and customers
3. There is insufficient public transportation available at Baker Creek and Hill
4. The homes are unlikely to attract moderate and low income families, even though the design is clearly intended for that purpose. They will not be affordable to those income earners. This was made abundantly clear in the meeting.
5. The developer has proven an inability to understand the desires of the community and indeed has displayed a disregard for the community values. Just drive or walk through the development at the Southwest corner to see the lack of parking, lack of space, lack of design diversity.
6. Stafford has been found to be in violation of building codes repeatedly. There is ample proof that they don't feel they need to follow the rules. This is pretty concerning without the rest of it.

If we could be allowed to share our experience in a growing bedroom community recently and earlier in a Southern California community during their boom in the late 70's early 80's, developers are a necessary component for a community to provide housing for the influx of residents, but it is incumbent on the local governing body to not only provide the guidance and statutes necessary to manage this growth, it must also listen to the desires of the community and try and work toward developments that retain the character and size and scale of those approved developments. It is sometimes too easy to give in to the spiffy presentations that developers can easily put together, as opposed to the unsophisticated modest presentations that three minutes allows for the average residents to respond.

Bellevue, Washington town council approved 45 floor rise residences in their downtown corridor. That brought in great tax revenue but then it decided to allow developers the right to build higher, when post approval, the developer sought additional concessions. The only problem was that the existing infrastructure and the new infrastructure built surrounding the new 60 floor high rises could not mitigate the enormous flow of traffic, both by car, on foot and by buses and taxis. There were insufficient parking spaces...so people double parked. There was not room to park large delivery trucks so they parked in the turn lanes. It took sometimes more than 15 minutes to exit the parking garage because cars decided to use the alley way to avoid the light at the corner! Left turn cars holding up cars going right or straight ahead when no turn lanes were available. People were no longer pleasant to one another. Courtesy was thrown away as if it had never existed. This is not what the residents of McMinnville want their city to become.

A developer's business plan is: arrive in town, build, sell and make a swift exit. Or as in Stafford's case here in McMinnville, acquire the land, get approvals and then sell to a smaller developer and get out ahead of the game! Residents of McMinnville are here for the long haul. We invest in our communities because we live here and we value them and want to protect them. You all serve on the city council because you live here and you want to protect the town from what it could so easily become....another suburban disaster.

There are those residents who must surely remember the hardworking, but quiet days of the farming community. Today, we have an industry that is attracting an influx of not only workers but also tourists. I work in the Wine industry here in the Valley. Wine is what initially brought McMinnville to our attention. McMinnville has such a unique opportunity to become the center attraction for Willamette Valley. But, it will only do so if we can somehow retain that lovely small town farming community that has understood the value of good food, good wine, good stewards of our land and water and an open and welcoming attitude so that tourists are drawn to spend time here. Believe me they do not want to spend their time on 99. They love driving the back roads to the vineyards and coming into town to enjoy our lovely restaurants, stroll down 3rd street. Let's build on that.

Let's find a way to enhance downtown with additional housing as your plan initially proposed and envisioned. Apartments above retail. Ample parking, parks for picnics and farmer's markets. Affordable housing needs to be near the main transportation corridor. That is a way to reduce dependence on cars and ease the burden on traffic congestion. If one looks hard enough we will find examples of a successful compact between community and developers that results in a true win-win for all. Stafford, so far, has not shown a desire for such partnership.

We urge you to stand firm in your resolve to protect McMinnville as we grow. We so appreciate your time and your obvious caring for your own town. We know that volunteering is often a thankless job and we appreciate you more than you can know. Please vote no on the Stafford Baker Creek North development.

There were a number of local contractors at the meeting. Why not give them some preferential treatment to build what we need, where we need it? You know where they live and there is an old saying, don't s**t in your own back yard. I'd trust them to protect our common interests and build decent homes, in locations that make sense for our community. We say "NO" to carpetbaggers, who truly have no accountability. Because when the problems start, they are long gone!

Nancy & Surinder Singh
978.758.2503
2200 SW West Wind Drive
McMinnville

Nancy Singh
978.758.2503